RESOURCES for School Librarians

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This article provides a collection of annotated citations for online resources of interest to school librarians; the focus is on copyright law, related information, and guidelines. The citations are organized by themes based on common issues. Copyright protects originally created works, including movies, recorded music performances, novels, photographs, video games, paintings, poetry, and more. This collection of resources offers a sample of information and materials available to school librarians as they work on copyright issues with students, teachers, and administrators.

Copyright Defined


This brief animated video provides an overview of copyright concepts, including attribution, ethics, fair use, and public domain as they relate to the educational use of copyrighted material. The concepts are explained in easy-to-understand language to assist educators with making appropriate copyright determinations for materials used in traditional classrooms and online learning management systems. Although this video focuses on higher education, the information is also applicable to the K–12 environment.

Fair Use


The U.S. Copyright Office examines and registers copyrights for authorship of various types of works. The site also provides basic copyright information, including definitions of copyright and fair use, as well as providing updates on current legislation related to intellectual property rights and international agreements related to copyright. If you use only one source, this is it!


This site offers a tool that helps users make a U.S. Copyright Code “fair use” determination. A time-stamped PDF document is provided to the user as evidence to demonstrate that a good-faith effort was made to reach the fair use decision. The site also provides explanations of fair use, including the four fair use factors: purpose, nature, amount, and effect.

The checklist is designed as a tool for making a fair use determination based on the specific facts of individual situations. A copy of the checklist can be retained as evidence of a good-faith effort to make an appropriate fair use decision.

Permissions


A summary of detailed steps to follow to obtain permission to use copyrighted work is provided on this webpage.


The Permission Templates are interactive tools that illustrate how teachers and students might communicate with authors of Web content to obtain permission to use copyrighted work.

Public Domain


This site offers a copyright digital slider for those trying to determine whether or not an item is in the public domain. Directions for use are provided on the site.


This model policy is designed to assist educators and students by providing information and guidelines for the use of copyrighted materials, especially in the development of digital media productions that include photographs, music, film, or video clips.

This site includes general information on copyright topics as they relate to online education. Examples and resources related to text, images, video, and sound recordings are provided to assist users when making copyright decisions about their Web-based course materials.


This site provides guidelines for taping educational television programs for use in classrooms. Also provided are the four fair use factors educators should consider when using copyrighted video.


The program is designed to help users make copyright determinations for a specific image, work of art, designed object, or portion of a built environment. Users answer a series of questions that provide insight on generally accepted practices within the visual resources community. The site recommends that users have a basic understanding of copyright principles before using the Digital Image Rights Computator.

Open Educational Resources (OER)


Creative Commons makes available free, easy-to-use standardized licenses authors can use to establish the conditions under which others have permission to use the authors’ creative work.


The Illinois Open Educational Resources website provides tools for curating, sharing, and creating career and educational resources. This example of a state-wide open resource exchange includes a variety of stakeholders, such as state leaders, school districts, educational technologists, workforce partners, and non-profit organizations, collaborating to share openly licensed educational resources.


This website offers a “#GoOpen District Launch Packet” as well as technical resources, publications, and other information to encourage educators to use openly licensed educational materials for the purpose of transforming teaching and learning.
Sample K–12 Copyright Lessons


The Teaching Copyright website includes free lesson plans, handouts, supporting documents, and other resources to assist K–12 educators interested in teaching copyright concepts and ethical use of the intellectual property of others.


The Adventures of Cyberbee site includes copyright resources for elementary and middle school teachers as well as an interactive tool that can be used for teaching students the basics of copyright.


This short video presents an example of a copyright lesson for students in grades 9–12. Topics addressed include copyright guidelines, vocabulary relating to intellectual property, and application of copyright rules to research projects.


The copyright and fair use curriculum developed at the University of Rhode Island (and supported by charitable foundations and the URI Harrington School of Communication and Media) addresses copyright and fair use. The curriculum is based on the Center for Media and Social Impacts’ “Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Media Literacy Education.” Lesson plans include activities and readings for high school and college students.


This brief video includes a lesson for students in grades 6–8. The teacher explains fair use guidelines and connects the discussion to the use of video content. Students work in small groups facilitated by the teacher to apply fair use standards to digital content.
Resources for Librarians and Educators


The Copyright Advisory Network Forum provides an avenue for librarians to ask copyright questions and to receive a response from a group of copyright scholars. The forum responses are considered informed opinions that do not constitute legal advice on copyright issues.


The MPLC site includes FAQs related to the use of movies and audiovisual content and copyright regulations. To support copyright compliance the MPLC sells an Umbrella License for public performance of motion pictures and other audiovisual media. These licenses permit showing of movies but do not provide access to the movies themselves. The movies must be rented or purchased elsewhere.


The USCO site supplies free authoritative circulars and brochures related to a variety of copyright topics. Circular 21 addresses the use of reproductions of copyrighted works by teachers and librarians. Reproductions addressed in this circular include photocopying, videotaping, duplicating sound recordings, and taping off the air.

Conclusion

This article provides a sampling of resources that may assist school librarians, when confronted with copyright questions and dilemmas, as they work with their clientele: students, teachers, and administration.

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